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PRESS RELEASE

USAID Business Environment Activity Supported the Fifth Conference on Enhancing Macedonian Exports

On June 11, 2009, the Ministry of Economy supported by the USAID's Business Environment Activity (BEA) held the Fifth Conference on Enhancing Macedonian Exports 2009. The conference was attended by 150 representatives from the business sector, Government of Macedonia, industry experts, and the donor community.

Keynote speakers at the conference were the Minister of Economy, Mr. Fatmir Besimi, Minister of Finance, Mr. Trajko Slavevski and USAID Acting Mission Director, Mr. Timothy J. Donnay.

"This annual event has proven to be an important forum for dialogue between the public and private sector on how to improve Macedonia's trade policy and business environment ... Competitive and effective international trade policies are a crucial element in the overall effort to enhance Macedonia's ties with other nations, and this conference plays a very important role." said Donnay.

The main objective of the conference is to strengthen Macedonia's capacity to address trade policy-related issues and to design appropriate responses regarding important emerging issues. The conference also aims to raise the awareness of trade issues in the government, the business sector and in civil society, and to strengthen the capacity of the local researchers and policymakers to analyze, formulate and implement appropriate trade policies in the spirit of the World Trade Organization trade regime.

This year's Conference on Enhancing Macedonian Exports is the fifth such conference supported by BEA. In addition to organizing these conferences, each year BEA assists with the preparation of the annual Macedonian Foreign Trade Report. The Foreign Trade Report 2009 was presented during the conference.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested nearly \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is implementing projects that create jobs, reduce corruption, and prepare Macedonian students for the workforce. These initiatives improve the quality of life and support Macedonia's transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.